

LAUNCH OF THE SHIREEN ABU AKLEH AWARD

**For the courage and commitment
of women journalists**

IFJ / UPF

International Federation of Journalists

IPC-Résidence Palace, Rue de la Loi 155, B-1040 Brussels, Belgium - +32 (0) 2 235 22 00

ifj@ifj.org

International Union of the Francophone Press

73, rue de Clichy, 75009 Paris - Tel: + 33 (0) 1 47 70 02 80 - sg@presse-francophone.org



Table of contents

I. PRESENTATION of the IFJ and the UPF	3
II. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATIONS	4
III. OBJECTIVES	5
IV. EXPECTED RESULTS	5
V. BENEFICIARIES	6
VI. ELIGIBILITY	
.....	
..... 6	
VII. SELECTION6
VIII. REWARD	7
IX. DURATION OF THE	
.....	
..... 7	
X. TIMELINE 7	



Shireen Abu Akleh, 3 April 1971 – 11 May 2022



I. PRESENTATION OF THE IFJ

Founded in Paris on 13 June 1926 on the initiative of Georges Bourdon of the French Journalists' Union, the International Federation of Journalists initially brought together a handful of unions around the world. It is based on ethics, solidarity and mutual aid among journalists worldwide.

Today, the IFJ is the largest organisation of journalists in the world, representing 600,000 journalists and media professionals from 187 unions and associations in 146 countries.

The IFJ speaks on behalf of journalists within the United Nations (UNESCO, International Labour Organisation, Human Rights Council) and the global trade union movement.

The Global Charter of Ethics, adopted in 2019 in Tunis, is a guide for all.

The IFJ promotes respect for the security and freedom to inform and be informed.

It organises a collective response to multiple attacks and supports journalists' unions in their fight for gender equality, fair wages and decent working conditions.

It opposes all forms of discrimination and condemns the use of the media for propaganda purposes.

It promotes a draft International Convention for the Protection of Journalists and Media Workers to end impunity for the killers of journalists and those who order their deaths.



PRESENTATION OF THE UPF

The International Union of the Francophone Press (UPF) is the oldest Francophone association of journalists recognised by international organisations (UN, UNESCO, etc.).

The UPF was founded on 13 May 1950, under its original name of Association internationale des journalistes de langue française (AIJLF), at the instigation of French and Canadian journalists. From the outset, **the UPF** sought to develop its relations around the world, first with Belgian and Swiss colleagues, before extending its network to Africa and the rest of the French-speaking world.

The UPF is unique in that it promotes and develops its mission around the concept of Francophonie. It is therefore the precursor of a movement, initially associative, which became institutionalised twenty years later with the creation, in 1970 in Niamey, Niger, of the "first intergovernmental organisation of the Francophonie", the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT). It was not until 1986 in Versailles that a conference of heads of state led to the launch of the institutionalised framework that would later become a summit, held every two years under the aegis of an organisation created for this purpose, the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

The UPF is an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) recognised by major international organisations such as the UN, UNESCO and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF). It brings together a large network of journalists, managers and editors from the print and broadcast media in some 50 countries on five continents.

II. CONTEXT AND JUSTIFICATIONS

The safety of journalists is one of the essential conditions, along with freedom of expression, for the exercise of their profession. However, throughout the world, issues related to the safety of journalists are deteriorating significantly, to the point of affecting their physical integrity.

This reality is even more prevalent for women journalists, who are subjected to verbal attacks, hate speech, assaults on social media, and even physical assaults, including rape and murder.



Many of our female colleagues are risking their lives to report the news and continue to do their job. It is a tragic and heartbreaking reality that many women journalists have been killed in the course of their work – or because of their work. Here are just a few names of women who, while coming from different backgrounds, share the common fate of having fallen simply for doing their job as journalists honestly: **Shireen Abu Akleh, Anna Politkovskaya, Ghislaine Dupont, Daphne Caruana Galizia...**

The courage and dedication of these women journalists, who chose the most dangerous fields and subjects in order to inform the public, should never be forgotten. It is important to recognise their merits and condemn the acts of violence to which they fell victim. This is essential in order to continue defending press freedom for all.

III. OBJECTIVES

Many women journalists have been victims of attacks – or may become victims – because of their courageous work and commitment to the truth. These attacks are serious violations of press freedom and endanger the safety of journalists around the world. It is essential to recognise and condemn these acts of violence and to continue to defend freedom of expression and the safety of journalists, regardless of their gender.

In this alarming context, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the International Union of the Francophone Press (UPF) have decided to jointly create an annual Shireen Abu Akleh Award, which will recognise the courage and commitment of women journalists around the world.

Shireen Abu Akleh was a prominent Palestinian-American reporter who worked for Al Jazeera for 25 years. She was recognised for her courageous journalism and her commitment to the truth. Her contribution to journalism was invaluable, and she left an indelible mark on the field.

Shireen Abu Akleh was killed on 11 May 2022 in Jenin, in a Palestinian refugee camp, while reporting live. She was wearing all the necessary insignia for field work: a bulletproof vest



with the word PRESS written on it and a helmet. A bullet fired by an Israeli soldier into the back of her neck, just below her protective helmet, proved fatal.

The establishment of this award is all the more important given that, on 27 October 2023, her memorial and the street named after her at the entrance to the refugee camp in Jenin, on the very spot where she fell, were destroyed by the Israeli army.

IV. EXPECTED RESULTS

Cases similar to Shireen's are unfortunately common: journalists, especially women, are victims of violence or threats because of their work. They are regularly targeted for reporting on sensitive issues, political conflicts or human rights violations. **It is therefore crucial to recognise the danger to which women journalists are exposed and to condemn these attacks on press freedom.** At the same time, it is important to show our support for our female colleagues who are exposed to similar risks today.

V. BENEFICIARIES

Women journalists, photographers and video journalists who hold a professional press card recognised in their country of origin.

VI. ELIGIBILITY

The Shireen Abu Akleh Award recognises the work of women journalists regardless of their country of origin, field of work or working language. All media formats (print newspapers or magazines, television, radio, online, audio reports, video, multimedia, etc.) are eligible. There is no time limit on the actions that led to the nomination.

VII. SELECTION



Selection is based on a nomination submitted by the journalist herself, by a consortium or media outlet where she works, or on a proposal submitted by a third party.

To be considered, the application must be accompanied by a detailed description of the actions that led to the nomination.

The description should be sent in either English or French.

The selection is made in two stages (pre-selection in March 2026, selection in April 2026, and so on for subsequent years) by a selection committee composed of seven people in total, including one representative from each of the following organisations:

- UPF
- the IFJ
- OIF
- UNESCO
- 3 journalists, men or women, who are prominent representatives of the profession (list to be specified)

Between these two stages, additional information may be requested from shortlisted candidates.

VIII. AWARD

The prize is worth 5,000 (five thousand) euros.

The selection committee reserves the right to divide the prize equally between two winners in the event of a tie.

The first journalist to receive the award was Antonina Favorskaya, a Russian journalist sentenced to five years in prison for publishing articles about opponents of the regime, including Alexey Navalny.



The prize was awarded publicly on 12 May 2025 in Paris and presented to her lawyer.

The award ceremony will take place at 6 p.m. on 11 May 2026 at the Résidence Palace in Brussels, during a ceremony open to the general public.

IX. DURATION

The Shireen Abu Akleh Award will be presented annually for an indefinite period.

X. TIMELINE

15 December 2025 to¹March 2026 – launch of the call for applications and receipt of complete applications;

1 March 2026 – deadline for submission of applications;

¹March 2026 to 15 April 2026 – review by the jury;

15 April 2026 – selection of the winner;

11 May 2026 – awarding of the Shireen Abu Akleh Prize.

Applications should be sent **by email** to the following addresses:

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ): ifj@ifj.org

International Union of the Francophone Press (UPF): sg@presse-francophone.org

lroyfij@gmail.com